



**AGM Minutes, Saturday 27th January 2018,
St Anne's Church Hall, Aberystwyth**

Members Present

Dave Reynolds (webmaster/publicity), Sarah Reynolds, **Borth**; Tony Peters (Health and Safety Officer), Paul Fisher, **Barry**; Richard Gloster (Northern Rep), Jill Gloster (CPO), Richard Aherne, **Porthmadog**; Tina Parsons (Secretary), Paul Parsons, **Ynys Mon**; Ian Andrews, Mike Rogers, **Aberdyfi**; Roy English, Jeanette English, **Beaumaris**; Sharon Jones, Barry Davies, **Llanberis**; Helen Tan, Laura Hood, **Welsh Rowing**; Sam English (Training Officer), **Aberporth**; Lyn Jenkins, Mike Miles, **Solva**; Helen Heaton, **Llangwm**; Richard James, **St Dogmaels**; Debbie Drewett, **Llanion**; Elin Powell, **RWYC Caernarfon**; Jane O'Connor (Mid Rep), **Aberaeron**; Dan Tomkins, **New Quay**; Alison Seal Jones, Diane Eagle, April Smart, **PYC**; Quentin Shaw, Justin Reynolds, **SARC**; Andrew Richards (Vice Chairman) Neil Cross, Simon Collins, **Wisemans Bridge**; Martha Owen, Mike Hughes, **Fishguard**; Pete Fletcher (Chairman), **Newport**; Chris Haines (Race Officer), **Aberystwyth**.

Apologies

Andy Cox, **Aberystwyth**; Nic Thomas (Southern Rep), Jac Davies, **Towy**; Carol Davies (Membership Secretary) **Llangrannog**.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes were verified to be a true reflection of events.
Proposed by Richard G, Seconded by Simon C.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

Membership was up this year on previous years which was a good sign, indicating more people are becoming interested in the sport, and more new clubs are forming in both the South and the North, there had also been interest from more clubs in England.

The numbers racing this year have been consistent with the year before, but down on 2015, the WSRA will keep an eye on this and if numbers drop any further we may have to look at what needs to be done to reinvigorate the interest.

The standard of race events had been high, and the standard of racing had improved, which Pete believed could be partly contributed to training that had been taking place, and the success of extra rules put in place over the recent years. Events had been well organised, well catered and well supervised across the board. Well done to all clubs.

Ocean to City didn't have such a good day but it was still well attended, and WSRA clubs entered a huge contingent of boats in the Great River Race again this year.

A big well done to the Celtic Challenge Committee for a well organised race, all be it a challenging race this year! Pete was particularly pleased to have beaten the Aberystwyth crew home.

Congratulations too to all those who went over to compete in Italy this year.

There has been a good rise in sculling numbers, the Welsh squad are really putting Wales on the map by competing in both UK and overseas events, and Pete can see them developing even further into the future. We now have a number of British Rowing qualified Coach Educators in the WSRA, who are able to teach other people to become Level 2 Coaches.

A lot of interest is being drummed up in schools by Sam in her role for Welsh Rowing and is increasing interest in Indoor Rowing and Sea Rowing alike, so well done Sam for all the hard work.

Well done to all clubs who won league trophies this year and it was nice to see them in presentation dinner

Pete was feeling very positive looking ahead for 2018, the only worry looking at the race calendar being that we might be diluting some of the league races by holding too many other events. We are a big Association run by a limited number of people who work hard to make things happen. A big thank you was given to everyone on the committee for their contribution.

Treasurer's Report

A copy of the full accounts had been sent out to all clubs in advance of the meeting. Expenditure was almost identical to last year. Insurance Premium Tax had risen. A small amount of money had been spent on sponsorship and equipment. In 2017 the Association had also had to pay to use the Cardigan Fisheries premises (ex Aberystwyth Yacht Club) for meetings, whereas in the past these had been free. Pete noted that there were two bills yet to pay out of the final balance for the year, the Welsh Rowing Affiliation fee of £500 and a bill for boat repair for approx. £500ish. Overall profit for the year was up by more than £2000 on the previous year.

After discussion regarding the breakdown of profit and loss, Pete asked that the full accounts be signed off today, this was proposed by Chris H, and seconded by Richard G. The accounts were then signed off in the room by both Pete F and Andrew R.

Roy E asked about the value of the WSRA assets as these weren't detailed on the short version of accounts which had briefly been discussed in the room [the full set of accounts had only been received from the Accountant a couple of days before, so had been sent out to all clubs only a day in advance of the meeting]. The WSRA fixed assets are the Celtic, the Yole and the Celtic mould. Pete explained that this year due to depreciation they were down to a value of just under £3000, given the rate of depreciation; it was assumed that the assets would have no value by 2019.

The association also receive royalties from Dale Sailing for every new Celtic Longboat provided via the WSRA mould. Pete asked Andrew R to check with Dale Sailing to clarify any outstanding royalties owed to the WSRA.

Action: Andrew R to chase Dale Sailing on outstanding royalties from new Celtic Longboats.

Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary had been unable to attend the meeting but had asked the Secretary to read out a report on her behalf:

During Carol's absent year as Membership Secretary, she could see that some things had not been done, which, if she remains the Membership Secretary, she would like to bring back, one of which was the Affiliation Certificates. These Certificates will only be issued to clubs once Carol has seen all the affiliation documents.

Also, new members during the season must be registered by 9.00pm on the Wednesday if they wish to race that weekend.

Carol will also be conducting an audit to ensure that membership numbers and payments received from clubs correspond; therefore, if she asks you for your most recent copy of your membership spreadsheets, please can you get these to her asap. Carol will conduct this audit at the end of every season she is in position.

She also promises to look at the membership emails more often. Last year was a very hectic one but she hopes to be more in control of matters this coming season

The question was asked about when the payment for a new member needed to be received. The Secretary advised that if a BACS payment was made, then as this was immediate, the club would need to let Carol know by email that the payment had been made, and also that they should identify what the payment was for on the transfer, by either giving the new members name in the transaction, or possibly the name of the club and number of members being affiliated, e.g. Towy x 3. This would make the payment more identifiable to Pete as Treasurer when he was viewing the account transactions. If a payment was being made by cheque, this would need to be with Carol on that Saturday morning at the latest. Andrew R added that Carol hopes to send out the affiliation lists to clubs prior to hosting their home races so that spot checks can be done on whether people registered to race are affiliated.

Secretary's Report

We've had another successful year in that membership numbers have risen again this year, to what I believe is an all-time high. This is a testament to the fact that the WSRA and coastal rowing in

general, continues to go from strength to strength, and it wouldn't be able to do this without the hard work put in behind the scenes by all the committee volunteers.

Overall attendance at league races last season was down, but it is my hope that given all the new members from last year, the league will be reinvigorated again this season with all the new blood. This year we adopted our new Racing Rules and Constitution, and saw the introduction of the Regional Representatives. Despite initial worries, this seems to have worked reasonably well, in that although matters arising may be discussed at the Executive Meetings to decide on a potential proposal to take forward from the WSRA, any big decisions aren't made, but then are carried forward to the AGM so everyone can still have their say, and their vote as in the past.

The introduction of the Race Officer position has also been of great help to me this year, in taking the pressure off in November/December, by taking over compilation of the Race Calendar, and also by organising who will be the WSRA Official at each race during the season. For me, the introduction of this position has been a positive move.

Again, I've enjoyed my year in this role, and it's been a wonderful way of networking with so many lovely people from other clubs across Wales. However, due to securing another job which is even further away from home, I must stand down this year, as my work-life balance is unsustainable. I hope that whoever takes over from me will enjoy the journey as much as I have, and will take the same pleasure in seeing the Association grow.

Ratification of Race Dates for 2018 Season

The race calendar had not yet been fully agreed and some dates were still subject to change. The race Officer asked that the calendar as it stood could be agreed in principle at this meeting with the minor amendments to be inserted before the calendar was published.

It was confirmed that the Wreck Race would be changing date to the Saturday before the Wiseman's Bridge League Race to enable our Italian visitors to participate in two races on the same weekend.

Proposal to ratify the dates, subject to the minor changes which can be agreed by the Executive Committee. 1st approver Helen H, Seconded by Mike M. Agreed by all present, motion carried.

Action: Race Officer to make the final changes to the calendar and submit to the Secretary for circulation, and to the webmaster for placing on the website.

Race Proposals

An attachment from the Race Officer had been sent out to all clubs in advance of the meeting detailing all proposals to be considered.

1) No Discards

Jane O felt that this may impact negatively on the smaller clubs who are unable to field a crew for every race, Mike M agreed.

Tina P felt that the size of a club was not an issue, but that having no discards would open up the playing field as you wouldn't know until the end of the season who had been able to attend all events, this was agreed by Sam E who's club had also suffered adversely from discards.

Helen H queried the proposal from Chris H regarding not being able to use members from another club to fill your boat, as this may affect whether you were able to field a crew in a race when a lot of your normal members may not be available. If every race counted, then you would want to try and put a crew in every one even if it were a combined crew. Chris explained that his idea was that a combined crew could still be entered for a category for the club to win the race on that day, and also for that crew's points to go towards that category for the league trophy, the only difference would be that those points should not be used towards the shield as that was specifically for accumulated 'club points. The principle of the 'Shield' and the 'Best Club' awards was that it was the best of one club pitted against the best of another, so that was the thinking behind not using combined crew points towards these particular awards.

Dave R stated that when host clubs send him their results, they must include the boat/crew team name, this was already a field on the proforma and many clubs had stopped providing this information which had left him in a situation a number of times where he had to guess which crews were which. Moving forward, completion of this category, whether results are submitted via the proforma or not, must be enforced, particularly in the case of composite crews.

Ian A supported abolishing discards as it would stop certain clubs choosing not to attend races which were further for them to travel and would maximise attendance at all the races for that particular league.

Proposal to abolish discards. Proposed by Chris H, seconded by Ian A. A vote was taken: 14 for, 5 against, 1 abstain. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to check which documents include reference to discards and edit as necessary.

2) The Points System

Chris H proposed a change to the points system from 30 points down to a set number of points for the first 10 places, and thereafter all other boats just get 1 point for participation (or 2 for the joint races).

Sarah R asked why a different point system had been suggested for the joint league races as opposed to the North/South league, Chris H explained that this had just been done to reflect the extra pressure of the joint race, a larger field, so a harder race.

Chris explained that under the current 30 points down system, if you missed a race or had a bad race you could never pull the points back unless all the other crews also missed a race, with a new points system you were still in with a chance as you didn't lose so many points in one hit.

Proposal to trial the new points system for the 2018 season; first proposer Chris H, seconded by Andrew R. A vote was taken: 14 for, 2 against, 3 abstain. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to update the relevant documents and the website.

3) Jane O proposed 3 separate leagues, so that the joint league races were taken out of the points for the North and South, thereby the joint league races could be considered the All Wales National Championship. The National Championship could be 3 races, 4 races, or just a single race.

Roy E and Helen H agreed. Simon C felt it would strengthen attendance at races, as crews who don't normally race would be more inclined to combine crews to race, particularly to combine strong rowers from different clubs to take part in the National Championship. Mike M believed that if his Solva rowers only needed to row in the South for their league rather than having to travel up to the Championship events, they would be more likely to race the league. Neil C agreed that the separate leagues made sense for the smaller clubs.

Roy E queried whether the National Championship would still be all 3 previously allocated joint venues, or were we still thinking of having 1 National Championship to be held over a weekend. Richard A suggested that if a National Championship were to be considered, whether the main race could be held on a Saturday. Andrew R added that if it were just one Championship, then people may be prepared to travel further for this with strong crews, particularly if it were a whole weekend event, and to attend one at distance wouldn't be such an issue to the clubs as it would be to attend multiple events. Sarah R agreed that the separate National league may encourage crews to attend regardless of the location. The single event and the suggestion of a Saturday race received positive feedback.

The matter was raised that if there were only 1 National Championship and the weather was bad on that weekend, there was no contingency. Chris H added that maybe this needed to be scheduled in earlier in the season to allow for a re-schedule later on if needs be.

Chris H had concerns that clubs may choose not to attend the National events, at the moment numbers were high at joint events as they were compulsory and it was the number of attendees which made the true 'All Wales' competition. Ian A also didn't believe that the National league would get the required attendance as a separate category, and therefore this league would be weakened. Several other clubs were still keen on the separation as they were unable to win their own leagues under the current structure unless they attended the joints, which they didn't wish to compete for. Tony P added that he would be keener to do the National Championship Races. Much discussion was had on whether to stick with the 3 joint race venues as the National Championship for this year, or move to the single event.

Jane O re-proposed the three separate leagues, North, South and All Wales National Championship, this was seconded by Helen H, and Helen H proposed that we keep the race calendar as is for this season utilising the three joint league race venues as the National Championship, this was seconded by Jane O.

A vote was taken; 18 for, 2 against. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to update the relevant documents and the website.

4) The Supervets Category

A proposal had been put forward by the Race Officer to make the minimum age of rowers 50 years old. A counter proposal had been received by email from Peter R in Beaumaris to make this 55 years old to be a true reflection of the rising age of rowers and a more level playing field.

Roy E revised the Beaumaris proposal to state that the minimum age of all rowers in the boat added up to 230 years in total rather than the current 200, this was seconded by Mike R. A vote was taken; 7 for, 12 against. Motion not carried.

There was a proposal from Fishguard to trial the Ultravets category for another year as this had not been fully utilised the previous season and crews had been training for this category. Roy E mentioned that addition of another category would just fragment the supervets and that there weren't enough 'ultravets' across the league to make it a viable competition. A vote to trial it another year was taken; 7 for, 7 against, 5 abstentions. The Chairman took the casting vote, to vote against retaining this category for another year. Motion not carried.

The original Race Officer proposal of making the minimum age of all rowers 50 years old was taken to the vote; 13 for, 6 against. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to update the relevant documents and the website.

5) Location of Joint League Races

Chris H said we had tried moving the joint race venues for 2017 season and it hadn't worked. Recently he had been in touch with clubs who were furthest away from the central point to ask how far/long they would be able to travel, and the responses he had received were no further North than Aberdyfi and no further South than New Quay. This equated to approx 3¼ hours drive for the furthest away. It was agreed by all that for the 2018 season; the Joint league should stay as 3 events in the locations already agreed when ratifying the race dates. For future seasons, a single event would be considered as the 'All Wales Championship, with the location potentially changing from North to South to Mid.

6) Race Start Times and Race Decision

For some clubs early race start times are unavoidable to enable them to catch the high tides, all clubs try to avoid races being too early where possible. The Race Officer stated that when he had allocated dates on the calendar from club's 3 choices, he had tried to pick the most suitable times. With regards to race decisions being made the night before a league event, this matter was discussed and as it was not always be possible to make a final decision that early, as weather conditions can change so quickly, it could only be recommended that clubs make a provisional decision the night before a race.

7) A new proposal was put forward [following on from the discussion under 1) No Discards] that for points to go forward towards clubs points you must have 3 rowers from the same club and only one could be borrowed. 19 votes for, motion carried.

Ratification of Minor Amendments to Race Rules

The proposed changes to the Race Rules had been circulated to all clubs prior to the meeting. Proposed by Chris H, seconded by Mike M. Agreed by all.

- 1) R11 Paragraph 1, Change first line to read:
"All Celtic and Pembrokeshire Longboats ...

Add the following to the end of the paragraph:

"Coastal Sculls participating in WSRA league races will be subject to FISA guidelines"

- 2) Addition of type of oar to racing rules

Action: Secretary to amend the Race Rules and replace them on the website.

WSRA Quad and/or Celtic Grant Application Decision

Sam E explained the proposal on behalf of the WSRA to purchase a sculling quad at approx £22,360 and another Celtic longboat at approx £12,091.91 [quotes had been obtained], with the assistance of a Sports Wales grant, whereby Sports Wales would cover 80% of the purchase price and the WSRA the other 20%. These quotes were inclusive of trailers and oars, and a trolley for the quad. The intention would be that both boats would be made available for hire to all WSRA clubs, but in times when the quad was off hire, or when it was needed for international championship training, the quad would be based down in Towy as a centre of excellence, to be utilised by the Welsh squad. There are also plans being put forward to form a centre of excellence in the North, if this goes ahead, the quad can alternate between these two centres. Laura H explained that the quad was an ideal boat for training juniors as it was a lot more stable in the sea and had the benefit of a cox. Ian A added that the quads do not have a very long life-span and are prone to warping. They are an excellent development boat for training purposes, but they don't last long as a competition class boat. The grant being applied for is for boats for development and training purposes, not for competition, but the boat will be as close to competition class as possible without moving into the high-spec cost bracket.

Sarah R brought to light that a special Towing licence was required for the quad due to its length, so this may be an issue for transportation between clubs who wish to hire it.

The WSRA would look to address any issues which are raised on transportation issues if they are successful with the grant request for the sculling quad.

Proposal to go ahead with the Sports Wales grant application; 1st approver Sam E, seconded by Andrew R. A vote was taken: 19 for. Motion carried.

Action: Sam E to progress with the application on behalf of the WSRA.

U14 Participation in League races

Jane O read out the minutes of the Sept meeting of the U14 participation sub-committee. No individual junior event has been arranged as yet. Jane recommended that an U14 participation event be reintroduced on league race days, as a straight line sprint of approx 800m.

Tina P queried whether juniors under 14 years old should be rowing sweep, and particularly in heavy Celtic longboats, and in open sea conditions as they weren't very strong and their muscles are not yet developed.

Pete F asked Laura H what Welsh Rowing guidelines say, she confirmed that they do not recommend that juniors should row sweep under 16 years old. However, it was mentioned that these guidelines would have been put in place to control intense training, which would not be comparable to the amount of training juniors would be doing in Celtics, which may only be once per week.

Neil C believed that if juniors were not permitted to race prior to being 14 years old that they would not continue rowing but would find other sports where they could compete. Some parents who were competing, felt it was a boring day for the children to be there all day without having their own event to participate in and that the race day needed to be more inclusive.

Proposal to re-introduce the U14 participation event this 2018 season at the discretion of the host club, and based on the above recommendations for a straight line sprint of approx 800m. Proposed by Jane O, seconded by Simon C. A vote was taken: 12 for, 4 against, 2 abstentions. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to amend the race form and other documentation.

Insurance Race Day Cover for Safety Boats

Rich A had asked whether it would be possible for the WSRA to have a 'day cover' in place to ensure that boats who were worried about helping at race events could be reassured that a 'day cover' was in place if anything were to happen.

Mike M stated that all boats should have their own adequate insurances in place which would also cover 3rd party insurance. Andrew R also reiterated that if any boats who were not insured wished to obtain insurance to help on a race day, they could do so through the WSRA, but that the boat owner would have to pay for this insurance cover, not the WSRA.

Tony P asked whether there could be an 'event' cover for the day, Andrew R mentioned that the current insurance provision already covers volunteers at race events, but it was unclear whether a person acting as a safety boat would be covered by the WSRA liability insurance if an injury was sustained to a rower or other water user when they were trying to assist etc.

Action: Andrew R to check the policy to see if the safety boats would be covered by the WSRA liability insurance should an incident occur, and to feed back the findings to the committee.

Italian Visit

Approx 20 rowers and 3 coaches are planning to come over to Wales at the end of April to participate in the Wiseman's Bridge League race and the Wreck Race and to enjoy some Welsh hospitality. It is the intention of the host club to reciprocate some of the hospitality always shown to Welsh competitors when they go over to Italy to race. A good deal has been negotiated for their accommodation and food for the three days, but extra help may be needed in funding their transport to and from the airport and throughout the whole weekend, and also towards a gala dinner on their last night.

Chris H had concerns about the Italian crews participating in the Wreck race as our style of rowing was so totally different to what they were used to and safety considerations must be made. Simon C stated that he would be insisting that the Italian crews could only go out on the water if they were coxed by a local cox and not one of their own.

Jill G and Rich A suggested that clubs who have previously benefited from the Italian hospitality be asked whether they would like to donate anything toward the visit. Both Llanberis and St Dogmaels clubs offered to donate £100 each at the meeting to start the ball rolling.

[Porthmadog also offered to contribute towards the visit, and post-meeting have now confirmed that they will contribute £200].

Action: Secretary to email out to all clubs to ask if any would like to contribute by making a donation towards the visit, and to contact Sam E if they can.

The proposal was made that the WSRA make a donation toward the visit of approx £1000 to cover mini buses (or a coach and driver) for the weekend, and the gala dinner, any surplus money to be refunded to the WSRA once costs had been confirmed. Proposed by Neil C, seconded by Mike M. A vote was taken: 16 for, 3 abstentions. Motion carried.

It was also agreed that the WSRA would cover the cost of their individual affiliation to the league to race at these events under WSRA insurances. The Italian crews would not accrue league points at Wisemans's Race.

Action: Sam E to obtain the names and dates of birth of all Italian visitors intending to row/race and to supply them to the Membership Secretary for insurance purposes.

Update on Festival of the Sea Event

Richard A confirmed all plans were still going ahead, however, due to a clash that weekend with the Castle to Crane event and the Llangrannog league race on the Sunday a decision had been made to move the date forward to 29/30 June, to coincide with the PYC league race on Sunday 1st July, to make a weekend of rowing. A joint event was being looked at with Seahaven who have previously held successful sailing regattas and were also seeking funding via the same route; Welsh tourism. The Council and Port Authority were on-board with plans, and plenty accommodation was available.

WSRA Secretary Being a Paid Role

The Secretary currently does between 5–8 hours per week managing the workload, dependent on the time of year. This has always been covered voluntarily, but due to the struggle to get anyone to take the position enquiries were made into the costs if it were paid via an agency. An agency was considered as there are issues with NI, tax, holiday and sick pay etc if the Association becomes an employer. Using an agency would manage all these issues through a third party, but the costs are high, e.g. for £10 per hour for the candidate the agency would charge £16.64. The committee felt that these costs were unsustainable.

An honorarium was suggested (normally a one-off payment), this still needs to be declared as an income for tax and DSS purposes by the person covering the role. During discussions it was agreed that this would be the way forward and a figure of £250 month was suggested, i.e. £3,000 per annum. To cover this expense in the long term it was proposed that there was an increase in affiliation fees from £12 per head to £15 per head (adult fee) from the 2018 season. Proposed by Simon C, seconded by Dave R. A vote was taken: 19 for, 0 against. Motion carried.

Action: Secretary to amend the club membership spreadsheet and all other relevant documents.

Action: Secretary to email out to all clubs and to place on the WSRA Face book a new message requesting expressions of interest in the Secretary post now it would have an honorarium on offer.

Election of Officers

Position	Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chair (also covering Insurance)	Andrew Richards	Jane O'Connor	Richard Gloster
Vice Chair	Neil Cross	Simon Collins	Sam English
Secretary	<i>Secretary position has now been filled - see note below</i>		
Membership Secretary	Carol Davies	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Health & Safety	Tony Peters	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Treasurer	Pete Fletcher	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Communications Officer (Publicity & Website)	Dave Reynolds	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Welfare Officer	Jill Gloster	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Training Officer	Sam English	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Race Officer	Chris Haines	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Northern Representative	Richard Gloster	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present
Southern Representative	Nicola Thomas	Agreed to stay in post	Approved by all present

[Mel Hopkins from Aberystwyth was co-opted outside of the meeting to become the WSRA Secretary]

Date of Next Meeting

Saturday 26th January 2019